

10 September 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian

### **No.5 Counselling Services**

I am writing to inform you that our previous school counsellor left our school at the end of the last school year, and to advise you that we have now commissioned the No.5 Counselling Services to support our students in school, as part of our commitment to their emotional wellbeing.

Children often access this type of support by talking to someone they trust: a friend, teacher, relative or neighbour, but sometimes that is not possible for a variety of reasons. Having a problem can affect a child's behaviour and their progress / attainment in school; a school counsellor can help with this. Counselling provides an opportunity for students to talk about things that concern them. Counsellors relate to children and have trained to listen without judgement. This can help your child to improve the way they feel about themselves, and to deal with situations and incidents such as stress, anxiety, self-harm, bereavement, relationship issues and anger.

A No.5 counsellor will be available one day per week during the school day. These sessions are voluntary, and students can request sessions with the counsellor by speaking with their Head of Year or a member of the Safeguarding team. There will also be the opportunity for students to "drop-in" during lunchtime.

Appointments will usually be about 50 minutes long. We will advise students of their appointment time and will expect them to attend promptly. All communication with the school counsellor is confidential, except when there is a concern of potential risk of harm. In this instance, the Safeguarding team will be informed and the appropriate action taken. No. 5 follow guidelines established by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), as well as the law relating to safeguarding.

#### *What is counselling?*

Counselling is not the same as listening and giving advice. Counsellors are trained to help enable a young person to talk about their life and problems. They do not judge or tell them what to do. Instead, they will support them as they think about how things can change for the better. Young clients often feel less angry, sad, or stressed after counselling. They can also feel better about themselves. Sometimes it helps to talk to someone who is not part of the home or academic environment.



*Will you tell me if my child is having counselling?*

Parents will not normally be told if a young person, who is over the age of 13, is attending counselling, unless a significant safeguarding issue is raised. These services normally reach more young people in need when accessed through a system of private, self-referral. They are also most effective when a young person feels free to talk in confidence.

*Are the counsellors professionally trained?*

No. 5 only uses counsellors in school who hold a Counselling Diploma from a BACP or UKCP accredited course or are accredited by one of these bodies.

We are delighted to be able to offer this service to our students and are confident that this will be beneficial for those that choose to engage with the service. No.5 Youth Counselling is a local service that has been supporting young people in Reading since 1971. Further information about No.5 can be found on their website [www.no5.org.uk](http://www.no5.org.uk).

Yours sincerely



**Miss B Davies**

Assistant Headteacher – Safeguarding and Welfare

